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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 1304
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU IMMEDIATE 1567
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 5607
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI IMMEDIATE 3155
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN IMMEDIATE 1329
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE 4592
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001442

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/SE AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/12/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: TFGG01: TURKEY PROVIDES HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE;
ASSESSING NEXT STEPS

REF: A. ANKARA 1427
[1](#)B. ANKARA 1426
[1](#)C. ANKARA 1423

Classified By: PolCouns Daniel J. O'Grady for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey has provided some humanitarian assistance to Georgia already and is considering an additional request from the Government of Georgia for a field hospital in Gori. A Turkish Red Crescent team is on the ground in Tbilisi assessing the situation. The GOT has not yet evacuated embassy employees' dependents from Tbilisi. The Turkish embassy there has been planning to evacuate them and other private Turkish citizens via Azerbaijan but awaits a final decision as to whether to move forward with the evacuation. The MFA crisis task force dealing with the situation is severely understaffed, with MFA calling a number of officers back from vacation to assist. GOT officials have not communicated with Russian counterparts since August 10, when FM Babacan spoke with FM Lavrov (ref c). President Gul has returned to Ankara and senior GOT officials are meeting today to discuss the situation and assess next steps, perhaps to include fleshing out the idea for a "Caucasus Stability Pact" first broached by PM Erdogan August 11 in comments to the press. We suggested Turkey opening its border with Armenia to allow transshipment of goods there would alleviate what could become a humanitarian crisis there as well as serve to further break the ice between Ankara and Yerevan.
END SUMMARY

GOT Provides Humanitarian Assistance

[1](#)2. (SBU) MFA Department Head for Central Asia Sule Gurel told us August 12 that Turkey has provided some humanitarian assistance to Georgia already and is considering a request from Tbilisi to set up a field hospital in Gori. Gurel did not have specific details but said press reporting indicating that Turkish Red Crescent had sent three vehicles into Georgia, including a communications vehicle and two semi trailers with 150 tents, 2,500 blankets, 150 beds, and 1,000 bottles of drinking water were probably correct. She noted

the Government of Georgia had requested Turkey set up a field hospital to treat the injured in Gori. The hospital is ready to go and Turkish Embassy and Red Crescent officials in Tbilisi are assessing the situation and will determine shortly when the hospital might be sent on into Georgia and where it will be set up.

¶3. (SBU) Gurel said Turkey has not seen an influx of Georgian refugees coming over the border into Turkey, yet. The main issue with which Turkish border officials had had to deal has been the evacuation of third-country nationals (mainly French, Germans, and Israelis) who have sought to enter Turkey with insufficient identification documents. MFA has been working with its counterparts in those countries to facilitate entry for their nationals.

¶4. (SBU) The Turkish embassy in Tbilisi has been preparing to evacuate a small number of embassy dependents and a larger number of private Turkish citizens from Tbilisi into Azerbaijan for repatriation to Turkey, but has not yet sent the convoy, according to Gurel. GOT officials continue to assess the situation.

¶5. (SBU) Gurel is temporarily heading up the hour-to-hour Georgia Crisis Desk MFA established in response to the emergency there until other officers who usually work on Caucasus issues can return from leave. Due to vacation schedules and the normal transfer of officers during August, MFA is severely understaffed. The Crisis Desk is operating from 0900 to midnight every day.

Don't Escalate With the Russians

¶6. (C) Gurel took note of today's NAC meeting in Brussels, reiterated the Turkish position regarding the need for an end to hostilities and negotiations, and conveyed GOT concern that tensions with Russia not be further escalated. That being said, she noted that it is clear NATO needs to send a strong message to Moscow. She added it remains Ankara's position that the NATO-Russia Council remains a good platform from which to maintain dialogue with the Russians, though the GOT was not specifically suggesting that talks on South Ossetia occur right now in that forum.

GOT Officials Assessing Next Steps; Help to Armenia?

¶7. (C) Gurel said President Gul had returned to Ankara from vacation and had convened a meeting today to discuss the situation. She thought it possible PM Erdogan's suggestion of the formation of a "Caucasus Stability Pact," first reported in the Turkish press August 11, might be fleshed out. She had no further details on the concept, to include potential members.

¶8. (C) Surmising that Armenia might well be involved in such a concept, we noted concerns USG officials have heard from Armenian counterparts regarding and interruption in the flow of supplies through Georgia into Armenia and pointed to the increasing possibility that the crisis in Georgia could become a crisis in Yerevan as well. We said the opening of the border to allow the flow of supplies through Turkey into Armenia would be a magnanimous humanitarian gesture that might further serve to break the ice between Yerevan and Ankara. Gurel said she would pass on the suggestion.

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